

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
AMCONSUL PORT SAID
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 17653

E.O. 11652/GDS
TAGS: PFOR EG SY IS XF
SUBJECT: EGYPT AND SYRIA ANNOUNCE "UNIONIST INTENTIONS", DEFINE
MIDDLE EAST POSITION FOLLOWING SADAT-ASAD MEETINGS.

SUMMARY. FOUR DAY ASAD VISIT RESULTS IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF
CREATION OF EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND AND
JOINT COMMITTEES TO DEVELOP "UNIONIST RELATIONS". JOINT
COMMUNIQUE AND FAHMY PRESS CONFERENCE STATE TWO COUNTRIES'
POSITION ON MIDDLE EAST, GENEVA CONFERENCE AND BILATERAL
RELATIONS: PLO MUST PARTICIPATE IN ALL PEACE TALKS AND AS
SEPARATE DELEGATION; PALESTINIANS REMAIN AT CENTER OF ME
PROBLEM WITH INDEPENDENT STATE AS FOREMOST RIGHT; EGYPT PRE-
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FERS SEPARATE DELEGATIONS AT GENEVA FOR ALL COUNTRIES; SINII III
DISAGREEMENT IS THING OF THE PAST; DIFFERENCES IN
POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF TWO COUNTRIES WILL REQUIRE CAREFUL
EXAMINATION OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS UNITY. END SUMMARY.

1. FOUR DAY VISIT OF PRESIDENT ASAD DECEMBER 18-21 WAS

TREATED AS HISTORIC EVENT IN CAIRO ALTHOUGH ASAD KEPT OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW. SADAT AND ASAD HAD FOUR LENGTHY TETE-A-TETES, ACCORDING TO PRESS, WHILE DELEGATIONS MET THREE TIMES. AS POINTED FINAL ACTIVITY, TWO PRESIDENTS ATTENDED ONE HOUR DEMONSTRATION OF "SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT" WITH DEMONSTRATION OF "SOPHISTICATED MILITARY EQUIPMENT" WITH BOARDING OF RECENTLY ACQUIRED C-130 AS HIGH SPOT. GOE PLAYED VISIT TO HILT AS PREORDAINED SUCCESS, ALLOWING PRESS TO SPECULATE AS COMMUNIQUE LATER ANNOUNCED THAT SUBSTANTIAL MOVEMENT TOWARDS "UNITY" WAS IN THE MAKING. STATEMENTS PUBLISHED IN CAIRO, WITH APPLICABLE AMPLIFICATION SUPPLIED BY FONMIN FAHMY IN DECEMBER 21 PRESS CONFERENCE, (HELD FOLLOWING VISIT POST MORTEM AT SADAT'S HOUSE), SUMMARIZED BELOW.

2. UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND: DECLARATION SIGNED BY BOTH PRESIDENTS, RELEASED DECEMBER 21, ANNOUNCED THAT "UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND" HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO LAY BASIS FOR AND CONSOLIDATE "UNIONIST RELATIONS" BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA. SIX JOINT COMMITTEE WILL BE FORMED IN FOLLOWING AREAS:

-- CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

-- DEFENSE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

-- FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION

-- FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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-- EDUCATION, SCIENCES AND CULTURE

-- LEGISLATIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS

TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND.

3. IN PRESS CONFERENCE, FAHMY SAID POLITICAL COMMAND WOULD PROBABLY CONSIST OF PRIME MINISTERS, FOREIGN MINISTERS, DEFENSE MINISTERS AND PRESIDENTS' ASSISTANTS. FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE WHEN THESE WERE NAMED. UNDER QUESTIONING, FAHMY SAID UNIFIED POLITICAL COMMAND "STRENGTHENS, DOES NOT REPLACE" CONFEDERATION OF ARAB REPUBLICS OF EGYPT, SYRIA AND LIBYA. (THIS COMMENT, AND CONSPICUOUS ABSENCE OF ANY MENTION OF JORDAN THROUGHOUT VISIT, WAS DISDAINFUL EGYPTIAN SLAP AT HUSSEIN AND HIS JORDANIAN-SYRIAN CONFEDERAL SCHEMES.) FAHMY AT-

TRIBUTED "REGRETTABLE SECESSION" FROM OLD UAR TO DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF EGYPT AND SYRIA. NOW, TWO COUNTRIES "MAKING A START ON RATIONAL AND FIRM BASES TAKING PAST EXPERIENCES INTO ACCOUNT". UNITY PROBLEMS WILL BE FIELD OF STUDY OF SIX COMMITTEES, FAHMY SAID. QUESTIONED ON RIFT OVER SINI II, FAHMY EXPLAINED THAT "PRINCIPLES IN COMMUNIQUE CREATE IMPRESSION THAT WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT WAS REGRETTABLE BUT WILL NOT AFFECT PRINCIPLES AND TIES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES". JOINT DECLARATION REFERENCE TO COOPERATION IN DEFENSE AND NATIONAL SECURITY, FAHMY INDICATED, DID NOT IMPLY EGYPTIAN INVOLVEMENT WITH ARAB SECURITY FORCE IN LEBANON ALTHOUGH EXPANDED CONSULTATIONS AND EXCHANGES OF VIEWS ON MATTER "ARE POSSIBLE". FAHMY ALSO DENIED THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMAND IN ANY SENSE A PREPARATION FOR CONTACTS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, STATING THAT "THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH EITHER CARTER OR BREZHNEV".

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4. MIDDLE EAST: JOINT COMMUNIQUE CALLED FOR RECONVENING OF GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE BEFORE MARCH 1977 IN ACCORDANCE WITH UNGA RESOLUTION 3162 AND STRESSED ROLE OF SECURITY COUNCIL IN "PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING JUST AND DOURABLE PEACE". FAHMY SUBSEQUENTLY DENIED THAT SYRIA AND EGYPT WOULD PARTICIPATE AS JOINT DELEGATION AT GENEVA UNLESS SUCH DECISION TAKEN LATER ON. EGYPT PREFERS TO SEE SEPARATE ARAB DELEGATIONS AND "SEES NO PROSPECT OF SUCCESS IF ONE DELEGATION REPRESENTS MORE THAN ONE COUNTRY". COMMUNIQUE ALSO STRESSED THAT PLO AS "SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTINAIANS" SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN "ALL PEACE TALKS" (PRESUMABLY THIS MEANS ALL STAGES AT GENEVA, BUT THIS LEFT UNCLEAR) AS INDEPENDENT PARTY ON EQUAL FOOTING. PALESTINIANS, WHOSE "FOREMOST RIGHT IS INDEPENDENT STATE" ARE CORE OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. COMMUNIQUE FURTHER CALLED ON WALDHEIM IMMEDIATELY TO BEGIN CONTACTS ON GENEVA WITH ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING PLO, WHILE US AND USSR, AS CO-CHAIRMEN, REQUESTED TO "SUBMIT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEIR VISUALIZATION AND LINE OF ACTION" AS REGARDS PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST.

5. ISRAEL: ISRAEL CONDEMNED IN COMMUNIQUE FOR EFFORTS TO "INTRODUCE DEMOGRAPHIC AND GEOGRAPHIC CHANGES" IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. "COUNTRIES GIVING AID TO ISRAEL" ONCE AGAIN INVITED TO SUSPEND ASSISTANCE "AS IT ENCOURAGED ISRAEL TO CONTINUE LOSING WEALTH OF ARAB LANDS AND PEOPLE". FAHMY DESCRIBED ISRAELI CABINET CRISIS AS "EXPECTED TRICK". ARABS "WILL PUSH ISRAEL TOWARDS PEACE TO PROVE TO WORLD THAT ISRAELIS AFRAID OF PEACE". (SAME THEME SOUNDED IN

OTHER PRESS REPORTS AND COMMENTARY DECEMBER 22.)

6. MISCELLANEOUS: COMMUNIQUE DECLARED JOINT OTIMISM ON COURSE OF EVENTS IN LEBANON AND PRO-FORMA SUPPORT FOR NON-ALIGNMENT, SOUTHERN AFRICAN LIBERATION, ARAB-AFRICAN CO-OPERATION AND CREATION FOR NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
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ORDER. SADAT HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO DAMASCUS, TIM-
ING TO BE DECIDED SOON.

7. COMMENT: RESULTS OF ASAD PILGRIMAGE TO CAIRO STRIKE US AS MORE FORM THAN SUBSTANCE. SADAT SCORED AN IM-PORTANT PERSONAL SUCCESS, SINCE IT WAS APPARENTLY ASAD WHO ASKED TO COME TO CAIRO. MOREOVER, VISIT SEEMS TO REAFFIRM SADAT'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PURSUING MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, THOUGH IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY MAY HAVE BECOME MORE CONTRAINED. UNITY THEME IS ALWAYS GRIST FOR ARAB PUBLIC CONSUMPTION MILL EVEN THOUGH IT MAY NOT MEAN A GREAT DEAL. FAHMY TOLD AMB THAT ASAD HAD TAKEN INITIA-TIVE TO SUGGEST CLOSE POLITICAL UNIFICATION TO STRENGHTEN HIS INTERNAL POSITION. EGYPTIANS, WHO HAVE BEEN BURNED ONCE THROUGH FORMALIZED UNITY WITH SYRIA, HAD ADOPTED GENERALLY POSITIVE STANCE, BUT EMPHASIZED TO SYRIANS THAT THERE WERE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS TO POLITICAL UNIFICATION. HENCE, VARIOUS COMMITTEES HAD BEEN AGREED UPON, MORE TO COORDINATE EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN EFFORTS THAN TO BRING ABOUT ANY EARLY POLITICAL UNIFI-CATION. DURING SADAT'S MEETING WITH GOVERNOR SHAPP AND AMBASSADOR YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, IMMEDIATELY AFTER ASAD DEPARTURE, THE PRESIDENT ALLUDED TO "POLITICAL UNIFICA-TION" WHICH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. THIS CAUSED VP MUBARAK, PRIMIN MAMDUH SALEM AND FAHMY, ALL OF WHOM WERE ALSO PRESENT, TO LOOK AT AMBASSADOR WITH KNOWING SMILES, CLEARLY SUGGESTING THAT THE PRESIDENT'S WORDS SHOLD NOT BE TAKEN TOO LITERALLY.

7. BOTH PRESIDENTS REAFFIRMED THEIR SUPPORT PLO PAR-TICIPATION IN MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS, BUT WE CANNOT YET BE SURE EXTENT OF THEIR AGREEMENT ON PLO LEADERSHIP ISSUE. JORDAN WAS NOT MENTIONED IN PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE. FAHMY, HOWEVER, LEVELLED INDIRECT SLAP AT HUSSEIN WHEN TELLING PRESS THAT ARAB UNIFICATION CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH EGYPTIAN/SYRIAN UNITY AND, ONLY ONCE
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THIS IS ACHIEVED, MIGHT OTHER ARAB STATES JOIN. NOT-
WITHSTANDING PREDICTABLE POSTURING RESTULING FROM SADAT-
ASAD MEETING, OUR PRELIMINARY IMPRESSION IS THAT SUB-
STANTIVE RESULTS WERE SHARPLY LIMITED. POLITICAL COM-
MAND HARDLY A BOMBSHELL, AS IT HAD EARLIER BEEN TOUTED
BY VP MUBARAK. ASKED FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS OF
TALKS, FAHMY WOULD ONLY SAY TO AMB LAST NIGHT THEY WERE
ALL CONTAINED IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ABOVE. HOWEVER,
SINCE CODEL SOLAREZ WAS THERE AT THE TIME, FAHMY MAY NOT
HAVE WISHED TO ELABORATE. AMBASSADOR HOPES TO DISCUSS
SUBJECT FURTHER WITH FAHMY IN NEXT DAY OR SO.
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